

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An apparatus for orienting blocks into a desired position, comprising a pair of upper and lower turntables including respectively upper and lower block supporting surfaces, said lower supporting surface extending outwardly
5 of, and below, said upper supporting surface, a peripheral wall outwardly spaced from said upper supporting surface, said upper turntable, said lower supporting surface and said peripheral wall defining a gutter dimensioned to receive blocks therein in a substantially longitudinal orientation thereof, an outlet provided at a downstream end of said gutter for allowing substantially
10 oriented blocks to be discharged from said apparatus, whereby blocks fed to said apparatus are received by said upper turntable, are positioned by said apparatus in said gutter and are discharged from said apparatus via said outlet.
2. An apparatus as defined in Claim 1, wherein said upper and lower
15 turntables rotate at different speeds.
3. An apparatus as defined in Claim 2, wherein said upper and lower turntables rotate in a same direction.
4. An apparatus as defined in Claim 1, wherein said upper turntable
20 comprises a central sloped structure adapted for displacing the blocks received thereon towards said upper supporting surface.
5. An apparatus as defined in Claim 4, wherein said sloped structure includes a section substantially shaped as at least part of a cone.
6. An apparatus as defined in Claim 1, wherein said peripheral wall defines an outside limit of said gutter.
- 25 7. An apparatus as defined in Claim 6, wherein said peripheral wall is stationary with said upper and lower turntables rotating inwardly thereof.

8. An apparatus as defined in Claim 1, wherein said outlet includes a guide extending downstream of said gutter and adapted to receive blocks therefrom.
9. An apparatus as defined in Claim 8, wherein said guide comprises a pair of substantially straight, substantially parallel, substantially vertical stationary walls, said guide constituting a substantially tangential continuation of said gutter at said downstream end thereof.
10. An apparatus as defined in Claim 9, wherein an outside wall of said stationary walls of said guide is substantially a continuation of a downstream end of said peripheral wall.
11. An apparatus as defined in Claim 1, wherein said upper supporting surface is sloped outwardly downwardly towards said gutter.
12. An apparatus as defined in Claim 11, wherein said upper supporting surface includes a section substantially shaped as at least part of a cone, said section sloping towards said gutter.
13. An apparatus as defined in Claim 1, wherein said upper supporting surface is provided with deflecting members adapted to cause the blocks to displace.
14. An apparatus as defined in Claim 13, wherein said deflecting members are positioned close to a periphery of said upper supporting surface.
15. An apparatus as defined in Claim 14, wherein said deflecting members comprise bosses that protrude upwardly from said upper supporting surface.
16. An apparatus as defined in Claim 14, wherein said deflecting members comprise frictional elements that are substantially flush with said upper supporting surface.

17. An apparatus as defined in Claim 14, wherein said deflecting members comprise fins extending substantially radially onto said upper supporting surface.

5 18. An apparatus as defined in Claim 1, wherein a spiral-shaped guiding device is provided above said upper turntable for guiding the blocks fed to said apparatus onto and along said upper supporting surface towards a periphery of said upper supporting surface.

10 19. An apparatus as defined in Claim 18, wherein said guiding device is stationary and is configured to gradually guide the blocks outwardly along said upper turntable.

20. A method for orienting blocks into a desired position, comprising the steps of:

15 (a) providing a pair of upper and lower turntables including respectively upper and lower block supporting surfaces, said lower supporting surface extending outwardly of, and below, said upper supporting surface, said lower turntable being configured and sized so that blocks completely received thereon are in a substantially longitudinal orientation thereof;

20 (b) feeding blocks on said upper turntable with a rotation of said upper and lower turntables causing the blocks to take position on said lower supporting surface in said substantially longitudinal orientation; and

(c) discharging the blocks in said substantially longitudinal orientation from said lower turntable.

25 21. An apparatus for orienting objects into a desired position, comprising a pair of upper and lower turntables including respectively upper and lower block supporting surfaces, said lower supporting surface extending outwardly of, and below, said upper supporting surface, a peripheral wall outwardly spaced from said upper supporting surface, said upper turntable, said lower supporting surface and said peripheral wall defining a gutter dimensioned to receive objects therein in a substantially longitudinal orientation thereof, an
30 outlet provided at a downstream end of said gutter for allowing substantially

oriented objects to be discharged from said apparatus, whereby objects fed to said apparatus are received by said upper turntable, are positioned by said apparatus in said gutter and are discharged from said apparatus via said outlet.

- 5 22. A method for orienting objects into a desired position, comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a pair of upper and lower turntables including respectively upper and lower block supporting surfaces, said lower supporting surface extending outwardly of, and below, said upper supporting surface,
10 said lower turntable being configured and sized so that objects completely received thereon are in a substantially longitudinal orientation thereof;

(b) feeding objects on said upper turntable with a rotation of said upper and lower turntables causing the objects to take position on said lower supporting surface in said substantially longitudinal orientation; and

15 (c) discharging the objects in said substantially longitudinal orientation from said lower turntable.